



Tenant

Housing for people, not profit

Inquilino

Vol 36, No. 11
December 2006

L.A. Court Clamps Down on N.Y.C. Slumlord Family

A Los Angeles Superior Court Judge on Dec. 8 issued an injunction barring the owner of 42 buildings from raising rents in them or buying any more property in the city.

Judge Ralph W. Dau's ruling came in response to a lawsuit filed last summer by City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo and the Los Angeles Legal Aid Foundation against Landmark Equity Management and its affiliated companies. The injunction—which also bars the landlord from entering the buildings, and named a retired judge to oversee repairs there—will hold until the suit is settled. It is expected to go to trial in May.

The suit, much of it based on tenant complaints, accused the owners of picking apartment buildings in gentrifying neighborhoods in Hollywood and other areas, trying to force tenants out by cutting off their water and electricity and threatening them with violence, then renting the apartments at much higher rates.

The Los Angeles Times said that Landmark's "affiliated companies also own several buildings in New York City and have faced similar complaints there." According to the Shalom Tenants Alliance in New York, Landmark president "Darren Stern" is actually Henry Shalom, a.k.a. Henry Ohebshalom—a member of the Ohebshalom/Shalom family, who have become notorious in New York for trying to harass rent-regulated tenants out of their apartments. The alliance described the Los Angeles Shaloms' tactics as "eerily similar to what our Shaloms are doing to us."

Larry Gross, head of a group which organized tenants in many of the buildings, told the Times that the decision was "some type of reward for all the tenants that have suffered under the hand of this ruthless slumlord and have had to endure some of the worst conditions in the city of L.A." But Dan Faller, head of the Apart

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ment Owners Association of Southern California, blamed the city's rent-control laws, telling the Times that "If you didn't have the bad law, you wouldn't have these bad actions... It is contrary to our American economic system of free enterprise."

Los Angeles rent control limits rent increases to 5 percent a year and also restricts grounds for eviction.

—Steven Wishnia